

RACES

Police and Panthers at War

The lethal undeclared war between the police and the Black Panthers flared up again last week, leaving still another key Panther leader dead. Just before dawn, a team of 14 heavily armed plainclothesmen from the Cook County State's Attorney's office raided a dingy West Side Chicago apartment, looking for a cache of illegal guns. Possessing a search warrant, the officers said that they forced open a barricaded door and were greeted by a shotgun blast. They returned the fire, setting off a furious ten-minute shoot-out with the apartment's occupants.

"There must've been six or seven of them firing," said Sergeant Daniel Groth, leader of the raid. "I asked everyone to lay down their ammunition and throw up their hands. A voice came from the back and said, 'Shoot it out,' and with this, they resumed fire. If 200 shots were exchanged, that would've been nothing."

Viciousness. When it was all over, two Panthers were dead, and of the seven others in the apartment, four were wounded. One officer was wounded. The dead were Illinois Panther Chairman Fred Hampton, 21, and Mark Clark, 22, a downstate leader of the party. The following morning, in a similar raid, ten Chicago tactical-unit cops burst into the South Side apartment of Panther Deputy Defense Minister Bobby Rush and seized a pistol and some ammunition. This time the apartment was empty, and there was no shooting.

State's Attorney Edward V. Hanrahan defended the raids as necessary "because of the viciousness of the Black Panther Party." But Francis Andrews, a lawyer for the Panthers, charged that Hampton had been "assassinated" by the police. Pictures indicated that Hampton had

been shot in bed; the Panthers claimed that he was asleep, the police that he was firing from the bed. Renault Robinson, president of the Afro-American Patrolmen's League, said that, based on evidence at the scene of the shoot-out, his organization did not believe the official police version of the incident. "We found no evidence that anyone had fired from inside the apartment," he said. "The fact that the door wasn't broken down indicated that someone let them in. If a two-way gun battle had been in progress, there's no way possible that policemen wouldn't have been shot."

Bomb Plot. The shoot-out was the latest in a series of gun battles between Panthers and police throughout the nation. Recent police clashes with Panthers have occurred in San Francisco, Chicago, Kansas City, Denver, Seattle, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, St. Louis and Sacramento. Twenty-one Panthers in New York have been charged with plotting to bomb public places. Panthers claim that the police are attempting systematically to destroy their leadership. Hampton was an educated, compelling speaker, popular among young blacks, and under his guidance the organization was growing. The Panthers point out that Rush is next in line to take over in Chicago. His apartment was the one that was raided the following morning.

Charles Garry, a San Francisco lawyer who represents the Panthers, said that the two Chicago deaths brought to 28 the number of Panthers killed in clashes with the police since the beginning of 1968. He revealed plans to go before the United Nations and charge the United States with "genocide" against the Panthers. The black Patrolmen's League joined black community leaders and politicians as well as the American Civil Liberties Union in calling for a probe to determine the facts of Hampton's death.

Unsettling Element. Police officials around the country and Justice Department officials in Washington deny that there is any concerted nationwide drive against the Panthers. "But we obviously keep an eye on them," says an FBI source. The FBI also supplies intelligence to local departments and has been known to participate in raids on Panther headquarters, although both Chicago raids last week were exclusively local affairs. There is no doubt that the Panthers, with their caches of weapons and militant speeches, are an unsettling element in ghettos—and not just to the police. Much of their violence has been spent fighting rival black groups. Because of their willingness to shoot back when attacked, they are often blamed for snipings in black neighborhoods. The Panthers' aim is a Marxist-style radical revolution, though so far there has been more tough talk than provable action.

Whether or not there is a concerted police campaign, the ranks of Panther leadership have been decimated in the past two years. Bobby Hutton, national treasurer, was killed in a battle with Oakland police in April 1968. Huey Newton, minister of defense, is in prison, as is Panther Chairman Bobby Seale. Eldridge Cleaver is a fugitive overseas. Last week David Hilliard, party chief of staff, was arrested on charges of threatening the life of President Nixon. Hilliard had delivered an inflammatory and obscene speech during San Francisco's Mobilization Day rally last month, and at one point had said: "We will kill Richard Nixon. We will kill any mother ----- that stands in the way of our freedom." Said Raymond Masai Hewitt, minister of education: "We speak in the rhetoric of the ghetto and we're not going to change it to suit anybody's Marquess of Queensberry rules." The police seem to feel just as violently about the Panthers.



DAVID HILLIARD



FRED HAMPTON

HAMPTON'S BLOODY BED

not go down well with the poor, whose problem is not dieting. Ralph D. Abernathy, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, later railed: "I lived with people who couldn't afford cottage cheese or catsup."

Mastering Moynihan. By the second day of the conference, the poor felt increasingly out of touch with the rest of the delegates, many of whom were busy talking about topics only peripherally related to hunger. Fannie Lou Hamer, a Mississippi civil rights leader, walked into a panel discussing legalized abortion and roared: "What the hell has that got to do with feeding hungry people?" As a result of their disaffection, the representatives of the poor held a separate session of their own.

That meeting appeased some of the delegates. However, it was Conference Chairman Dr. Jean Mayer's persuasive politicking in various panel caucuses that led to the ultimate statement of priorities. The debate on what those priorities should be exposed a basic difference of opinion within the Nixon Administration on remedying poverty and hunger. On one side was Counselor to the President Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who had developed the Nixon income-support program. That program, Moynihan feared, might be endangered if emphasis on food-distribution reform led to congressional wrangling over funds. Thus Moynihan wanted a guaranteed annual income proposal to get top priority. On the other side, Dr. Jean Mayer wanted the emergency-food resolution to take precedence. In the struggle to corral delegates, Mayer mastered Moynihan.

Charming and Caustic. For Mayer (pronounced My-air) it was an important victory. The conference has clearly advised the President that his first obli-

gation must be to feed the hungry and, only after that is done, to work at achieving an income-maintenance program.

Mayer, 49, is accustomed to battles—and winning. He visited America in 1939 with his father, who headed a French medical and scientific mission to the U.S. When war broke out in Europe, Mayer joined the Free French force-

HAP STEWART—BETHEL



FANNIE LOU HAMER
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es and served as an officer for three years (1942-1945), winning 14 decorations. After the war, he returned to the U.S. to become an American citizen and to study physiological chemistry at Yale. In 1950 he became a professor of nutrition and public health at Harvard. Alternately charming and caustic, Mayer has proved his political capabilities in the few months that he has spent in Washington as the President's chief adviser on hunger and in organizing last week's conference. Encouraged by the outcome of the meeting, Mayer said, "It has dramatized hunger and poverty for the press, for the Congress, for the readers of newspapers, for professional people in the health services and social agencies, for the farmers and for industry."

Perhaps so, but at week's end the ultimate effect that the conference would have on presidential action was in doubt. A group of conference members met with the President and announced that although Nixon did not seem prepared to declare a national hunger emergency, he had promised rapid action to help ease the crisis. Moynihan disputed this report. On the contrary, he argued, the President had not committed himself to further antihunger measures. Moynihan contended that the Administration would most likely stand by current antihunger proposals and would strive to begin food-stamp programs in 307 counties in the U.S. that do not now have them.

PAUL CONKLIN



DR. JEAN MAYER
Persuasive politicking.